

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 6615

To direct the Librarian of Congress to establish a program in the American Folklife Center to collect video and audio recordings of personal histories and testimonials of those affected by the COVID–19 pandemic, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 24, 2020

Mr. BERA introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on House Administration

A BILL

To direct the Librarian of Congress to establish a program in the American Folklife Center to collect video and audio recordings of personal histories and testimonials of those affected by the COVID–19 pandemic, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “COVID–19 Oral His-
5 tory Project Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM AT AMERICAN**
2 **FOLKLIFE CENTER TO COLLECT VIDEO AND**
3 **AUDIO RECORDING OF HISTORIES OF THE**
4 **COVID-19 PANDEMIC.**

5 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Librarian of Congress shall
6 establish an oral history program in the American Folklife
7 Center at the Library of Congress to collect and make
8 publicly available in a digital format individual stories of
9 events and experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic
10 in the United States. In carrying out the program, the
11 Librarian shall—

12 (1) collect video and audio recordings of per-
13 sonal histories and testimonials of those who were
14 affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, such as first
15 responders and health care workers, individuals who
16 survived the disease, family members of those who
17 passed away from the disease, individuals who were
18 repatriated from other countries or from cruise
19 ships, individuals with major life events affected by
20 responding to the outbreak, as well as any other in-
21 dividuals whose lives were altered;

22 (2) create a collection of the recordings ob-
23 tained (including a catalog and index) which will be
24 available for public use through the digital collec-
25 tions of the Library of Congress and such other

1 methods as the Librarian considers appropriate to
2 the extent feasible subject to available resources; and

3 (3) solicit, collect, and make available in a dig-
4 ital format written materials (such as letters and
5 diaries) relevant to the personal histories of health
6 care workers and first responders who served during
7 the COVID–19 pandemic and to catalog such mate-
8 rials in a manner the Librarian considers appro-
9 priate, consistent with and complimentary to the ef-
10 forts described in paragraphs (1) and (2).

11 (b) USE OF AND CONSULTATION WITH OTHER ENTI-
12 TIES.—The Librarian may carry out the activities de-
13 scribed in paragraphs (1) and (3) of subsection (a)
14 through agreements and partnerships entered into with
15 other government and private entities, including through
16 collaboration with existing archival and oral history pro-
17 grams throughout the United States, and may otherwise
18 consult with interested persons (within the limits of avail-
19 able resources) and develop appropriate guidelines and ar-
20 rangements for soliciting, acquiring, and making available
21 recordings under the program under this Act.

22 (c) TIMING FOR AUTHORITY TO COLLECT RECORD-
23 INGS.—

24 (1) INITIATION.—As soon as practicable after
25 the enactment of this Act, the Librarian shall begin

1 collecting video and audio recordings under sub-
2 section (a)(1).

3 (2) SUNSET.—The authority of the Librarian to
4 collect video and audio recordings under subsection
5 (a)(1) shall terminate upon the expiration of the 5-
6 year period which begins on the date of the enact-
7 ment of this Act.

8 **SEC. 3. PRIVATE SUPPORT.**

9 (a) ACCEPTANCE OF DONATIONS.—The Librarian of
10 Congress may solicit and accept donations of funds and
11 in-kind contributions to carry out the oral history program
12 under section 2.

13 (b) ESTABLISHMENT OF SEPARATE GIFT AC-
14 COUNT.—There is established in the Treasury (among the
15 accounts of the Library of Congress) a gift account for
16 the oral history program under section 2.

17 (c) DEDICATION OF FUNDS.—Notwithstanding any
18 other provision of law—

19 (1) any funds donated to the Librarian to carry
20 out the oral history program under section 2 shall
21 be deposited entirely into the gift account estab-
22 lished under subsection (b);

23 (2) the funds contained in such account shall be
24 used solely to carry out the oral history program
25 under section 2; and

1 (3) the Librarian may not deposit into such ac-
2 count any funds donated to the Librarian which are
3 not donated for the exclusive purpose.

4 **SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

5 (a) AUTHORIZATION.—There are authorized to be ap-
6 propriated to carry out this Act—

7 (1) \$7,600,000 for fiscal year 2020; and

8 (2) such sums as may be necessary for each of
9 the fiscal years 2021 through 2024.

10 (b) CONTINUING AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.—Any
11 amount appropriated pursuant to the authorization under
12 this section shall remain available until expended.

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